

CANDID ADDRESS

TO THE

EPISCOPALIANS OF PENNSYLVANIA,

IN RELATION TO

THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THE AFFAIRS OF THE DIOCESE.

BY PLAIN TRUTH.



APRIL, 1827.

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TO THE

EPISCOPALIANS OF PENNSYLVANIA.

BRETHREN—You need not be told that the approaching convention of our church at Harrisburg, is one of most vital importance to the best interests of our communion. Upon its proceedings depend, to no small extent, the peace and harmony of the church in the diocese, and her ultimate preservation in that integrity and purity, on which she was founded by the few Episcopalians who survived the revolution, and in which she has been maintained by the kind providence of God, through evil, and through good report, from that dark period of her existence to the present moment. The experience of the late Special Convention evinces, beyond the possibility of doubt, that there is a spirit abroad in our church, not the pure, quiet, and humble spirit of religion for which we should pray, and in the signs of which we should rejoice, but one of a dark and boding character, which, if not repressed in time, by the firmness of the old and tried friends of piety, and the church, may issue in consequences fatal, not merely to the respectability of our communion, but to its purity as the great safe-guard of the unadulterated doctrines and principles of the word of God.

With a mind impressed with a sense of responsibility for what is to be written; anxious that the true interests of the church in this diocese, should not be sacrificed to the demon of party spirit; and especially, solicitous that the members of our communion should not be left to form opinions, and to act, in ignorance and darkness, on points, involving matters of the highest moment to her concerns, I propose to lay before you, a brief, but plain history of some recent transactions in the church in this diocese, and then to offer a few remarks upon the present crisis of her affairs.

Until the Convention of our church, held at Norristown in 1824, no public evidence has been furnished of any determination, on the part of those of the clergy who now seek to distinguish themselves by the title of evangelical, to act as a distinct party in the church in this state, in opposition to the bishop. It was previously well known, that perfect uniformity of sentiment did not prevail among the clergy on all points of doctrine, discipline, and policy. But these had hitherto been merged by the spirit of compromise, in general uniformity of action. The lines of party, however, were drawn at Norristown,

by a secret attempt on the part of some of the clergy, to omit from the deputation to the General Convention, those clergymen, who then ranked among the friends of the Rt. Rev. Bishop White, and to elect others of opposite sentiments and views in their place. In this effort they succeeded; because the clerical gentlemen on the other side, had no expectation that such an attempt would be made; and were actually voting for some of those very persons, who were thus secretly endeavouring to remove their friends from office. The journals show, that the Rev. Dr. Abercrombie, and the Rev. Mr. Kemper, two of the bishop's friends, were turned out to make room for the Rev. Mr. Allen and the Rev. Mr. Boyd, two of the opposite party.

In the Convention of 1825, held in St. Paul's church, Philadelphia, an exclusive party ticket was voted for by those reverend gentlemen again: and it succeeded. Even on that occasion, an exclusive party ticket was *not* set up against them by the friends of the bishop. It was at this Convention, that the ground on which those gentlemen did not vote for the bishop's friends, was avowed to be, because the bishop's friends *could not represent their views in the General Convention.*

The friends of the bishop were thus constrained to assume the attitude of a party; and at the Convention at Reading, held in May, 1826, an exclusive ticket was voted for on both sides: and the bishop's friends succeeded in electing their candidates.

In the interim, between the conventions at Norristown and at Reading, the Philadelphia Recorder, a paper under the editorial management of the Rev. Mr. Lippitt, and afterwards of the Rev. Mr. Bedell, was made the vehicle of disseminating such party views and sentiments, and even of personal insinuations against the bishop, as to compel the Rt. Rev. Bishop White and his friends, to discontinue their patronage of that paper.

Some time in June, 1826, some publications appeared in the Philadelphia Recorder, respecting an attempt made in the preceding year, to establish an Education Society in this diocese; from which statements, it appears, that the main ground which divided the two parties, was, the desire on one side, and the indisposition on the other, to support the views of the Rt. Rev. Bishop White, for making the contemplated institution subservient to the support of the Theological Seminary, which had been established by the General Convention, and sanctioned and approved by the Convention of Pennsylvania.

In the month of July, 1826, the Rt. Rev. Bishop White, voluntarily, and without solicitation, brought before the Standing Committee, acting as a council of advice, the subject of the expediency of electing an Assistant Bishop; and with their advice and consent, on the first of August, called a Special Convention, to consider it, and act in relation thereto.

Previously to the assembling of the Convention, two inflammatory circulars were issued, one signed "A Fellow Layman," and the

other "Hooker." The former presented the hasty reasonings and conclusions of a man, who had unguardedly undertaken to discuss a subject without the requisite information as to the facts and positions on which his arguments and deductions were to rest. He was replied to by a temperate, judicious, sound and well weighed circular from a brother layman, who placed the stormy subjects which had been started, very quietly at rest. After this, "Hooker" issued his production; avowedly against the measures which the bishop had taken, and with an obvious design to effect a party purpose. The intemperance, the disingenuousness, the personalities, and the bitterness of spirit, which signalised that circular, produced an electric shock of disgust and mortification in the minds of the friends of the church: even prevented those whose cause it was designed to subserve, from venturing openly to approve of it, although they took pains privately to circulate it,—and find their only mitigation in the fact, (now pretty generally known) that it was penned by a young deacon of short standing in the church, who had, as a clergyman, resided hardly a month in the diocese, and who had not, perhaps, been long enough under the power of the humbling principles of the gospel, to have his fiery dispositions entirely within his control. The circular "Hooker," furnished a painful prognostic, that he who penned, and they who sanctioned it, would not very readily be curbed in the party career on which they had set out. That prognostication was amply verified in the proceedings of the Special Convention. In the course of the session of that body, the Right Rev. Bishop White was deliberately told by a layman,* of the most active description among those who are self-styled evangelical, that the reason why he (the layman) had opposed a proposition to appoint a committee to accelerate the organization of the Convention was, that he thought the bishop would *not act impartially* in the selection of the committee. The answer of the venerable prelate of eighty years to this gross insult was, "I thank you for the good opinion you entertain of me." This insult publicly offered, was never publicly retracted.

Of the lay members who composed the Convention, fifty-two were entirely new members, who had never been (as far as the journals show) at any convention before. Of these fifty-two, thirty-eight sided invariably upon every contested question with those who act in opposition to the bishop.

One of the lay members had not been for many years a worshipper, and did not become pewholder in the church which he represented, until the second day of the meeting of the Convention. The journal states at p. 19, that he purchased a pew on the 26th of October, 1826. The constitution requires the deputies to be worshippers in the church which they represent. He ranked and voted *invariably* against the friends of the bishop on all disputed questions.

The Rev. Mr. Bedell proposed, and the Rev. Mr. Boyd seconded,

* Mr. S. J. Robbins.

† Mr. John McElroy.

a resolution for admitting a colored clergyman to a seat in the Convention, whose vote, had he been admitted, and voted, would have decided the election of the assistant bishop of Pennsylvania, as the clergy stood 27 to 27. What made this proposition of Rev. Mr. Bedell the more extraordinary was, that *he* had been one of the gentlemen appointed by the Convention to examine the facts connected with the cases of *all* clergymen whose rights to seats might be dubious, and had never mentioned this case of the Rev. Mr. Ward to his associates, to some of whom his introduction of the subject to the Convention, was matter of utter astonishment. Mr. Bedell subsequently seconded a motion to expunge his own resolution relative to the colored clergyman from the journal. Whether that clergyman would have voted with those who favoured, or those who opposed his admission, even if he were not pledged to the former, every man who knows any thing of human nature, can determine for himself. And whether, too, knowing that he would vote against them, those gentlemen would have moved for his admission, is a question very difficult to reconcile with the deep anxiety felt, and the laborious efforts made by them to secure the election of their candidate. The attempt to introduce him, forces upon us the conclusion, either that they supposed he would have voted *with* them, or that the election of their candidate was not in their view a matter of such great importance as it was represented to be. That any abstract desire to secure to the colored clergyman referred to, his constitutional and canonical rights controlled them in this attempt, is rendered questionable by the fact, that at the Convention at Reading, only six months before, of which both of those gentlemen were members, and the colored brother a spectator, not a desire was breathed, nor a finger stirred by them to establish his claims to a seat in that body.

One of the reverend gentlemen, Mr. Ridgely, whose right to a seat was contested, avowed in the Convention, that being in a distant part of the United States when he heard of the call of the Special Convention, he had come to Pennsylvania in time to be in the diocese one month before its meeting, thinking, he said, that that period of actual residence was necessary to qualify him for membership of the body. It was stated, also, by the Rev. Mr. Bedell, that Mr. Ridgely had been engaged by him as his assistant, by a private arrangement, to which neither his vestry nor congregation were parties. This arrangement could have taken place but a very short period before the convention; for Mr. Ridgely had been (on his own authority) but a month within the diocese. Whether these statements and facts have left Mr. Ridgely's "escutcheon as free from blots" as in the Convention he avowed himself anxious to preserve it, and whether they evince any evidence of superiority of religious principles and single-eyed piety over those of the clergy who act with, and support the bishop, I do not pretend to say.

Mr. S. J. Robbins moved the admission into union with the Convention of four new congregations which had been organized between the

date of the call of the Convention, and the time of its meeting. Whether those churches had been organized with a view to party purposes in the Convention, or with a single eye to the glory of God, and to the good of souls, is a question that can more readily be answered by those who urged, and effected their organization at that particular time, than by me; and the public decision of which must be left to that day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed.

The attempt at election failed, because the clergy were equally divided: there being 27 for, and 27 against the Rev. Mr. Meade.

Having postponed all proceedings concerning the election of an assistant bishop until the meeting of the next Stated Convention, the Special Convention adjourned on the 27th of October.

On the 7th of November following, the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, convened in Philadelphia. During the session of that body, the Rev. Mr. Meade, of Virginia, urged upon several persons the expediency of putting an end to the effort to elect an assistant bishop, during the Right Rev. Bishop White's life; and of thus endeavouring to allay the existing excitement in the public mind upon the subject, and to promote some degree of harmony and peace. The friends of Bishop White, having been consulted, acceded to the proposal; and a majority of them stood ready to pledge themselves to that course. Those who constitute the opposite party, refused to fall in with the proposal of the Rev. Mr. Meade, the single design of which was, to promote at least a temporary calm of the existing tempest. The Rev. Mr. Meade, it is well known, has since withdrawn from being a candidate for the office of assistant bishop in this diocese. How far he was governed, in so doing, by a knowledge of the proceedings of those who supported him at the late Special Convention, I know not.

Such is a brief history of recent occurrences in this diocese, in relation to our ecclesiastical affairs.

The church in this state is now divided into two distinct parties—the *friends* and the *opponents* of the Right Rev. Bishop White—those who *support*, and those who do *not support*, his general views and policy. Party ground was first publicly assumed by his opponents.

Your attention is now solicited to some general remarks upon the labours, views, and proceedings of the two parties in the diocese.

I. Their labours to advance the church.

The opponents of the bishop profess greater activity and zeal, in the cause of religion and the church, than the bishop's friends. That they make this profession, is a fact known to all who have paid any attention to the tenor of recent publications, or mixed at all in the private circles of episcopalians; especially, to all who have read the recent circular, signed by Messrs. Boyd, Bedell, Dupuy, Riley, and Robbins. As it is impossible to bring private characters before the public, and to institute any comparison between the two parties in this way, reference must necessarily be had to their public doings, in re-

lation to the church. The range of the comparison must also be brought within the period, since the public stand of party was taken by the opponents of the bishop. That period was 1824. What, then, does the public and accessible evidence of their zeal in behalf of the church in this diocese exhibit, in reference to those two divisions? Let us appeal to facts, which every one who wishes may investigate.

The following statements, collated from the journals, and other public documents, will throw some light upon the subject. The comparison extends back as far only as the year 1824, the year in which the opponents of the bishop first openly took a party stand.

The establishment of a bishop's fund is admitted, on all hands, and particularly at the present crisis, to be a matter essentially connected with the permanent interests of the church in this state. Let us see which of the two parties in the city are its best friends.

Contributions of the City Churches to the Episcopal Fund.

Churches on the Bishop's side.		Churches ranked against him.	
Christ Church, in 3 years,	\$156	St. Paul's, in 3 years,	\$49
St. Peter's, do.	155	St. John's, (N. L.) do.	20
St. James's, do.	221	St. Andrew's, do.	<i>Not one Cent.</i>
St. Stephen's do.	99		
*Trinity, do.	<i>Nothing.</i>		\$69
			<hr/>
			\$631

In the year 1824, the bishop's friends contributed \$342 to the episcopal fund; on the other side, \$50 were contributed. In 1825, the bishop's friends contributed \$309; on the other side, only \$79 were contributed.

In the year 1824, of the 12 country churches which made collections for this fund, 7 were of the bishop's side. In the year 1825, of the 21 churches which made the collections, 14 were of the bishop's side.

From May, 1825, to May, 1826, it appears, that of the 21 churches which made collections for the episcopal fund, 14 were those which support the bishop's side.

The Society for the Advancement of Christianity in Pennsylvania, is one of the most valuable local missionary institutions in the U. States, and was founded originally by the bishop's friends. It has employed 41 missionaries, gathered 31 congregations, and aided, directly or indirectly, in erecting 12 places of public worship. Collections for it are recommended by the Convention. Which of the two parties have given this institution the most constant and liberal support? Let the

* The deputies from this church were, at the Special Convention, against the bishop, though the rector and congregation were his supporters. It now ranks, rector, vestry, and congregation, cordially with the bishop's friends. It ought to be remarked, also, that all those congregations which are here ranked against him, contain many individuals, warmly and decidedly his friends.

following statement, from the last three reports of the society, speak. Our view is restricted to the city churches.

Collections for the Society for the Advancement of Christianity in Pennsylvania.

On the Bishop's side.		Against the Bishop.	
Christ Church, in 3 years,	\$199	St. Paul's, in 3 years,	\$105
St. Peter's, do.	167	St. John's, (N. L.) do.	23
St. James's, do.	184	St. Andrew's, do.	143
St. Stephen's, do.	189		
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	\$739		\$271

Of the life subscribers to this valuable institution, according to the list appended to the fourteenth annual report, it appears, that thirty-five out of forty-one are among the friends of the bishop. Of the annual subscribers, *one hundred and one*, out of one hundred and fifteen, rank among the bishop's friends and supporters.

Let it be noted, that this patronage of the bishop's friends, is not of so munificent a kind, as to render it impossible for those on the other side to equal it in amount. It might very easily be done, if the disposition had equalled the ability. For we shall have occasion to observe, in the sequel, that congregational collections can be urged by them, and funds can be raised without difficulty, if there be a particular party purpose to be accomplished.

From the last report, it appears, that, during the year 1825, only three churches in the country contributed towards the support of the society, and every one of the three ranks with the bishop's friends. To show, that in the employment of the funds of this institution, the bishop's friends have not acted upon party principles, let the following fact bear witness: That, since the year 1824, up to the present year, inclusive, that society has employed fourteen missionaries; of which number, *nine* have been persons who were, or are now, arrayed against the bishop and his friends.

The facts thus stated are spread upon the public documents of the society, and may be examined by all who will take the trouble to do so. Let the lay members of the churches at Pike, at New Milford, at Springville, at Lewistown, at Wilkesbarre, at Easton, at Brownsville, at Greensburg, at Muncy Creek, at Jerseytown, at Huntington, at Bloomsburg, at Meadville—let, I say, the lay members of the churches at these places ask and examine, who first sent them missionaries, and who afterwards supported them? Who first gave the impulse to their efforts, and who afterwards cherished it? And they will learn, that a society, which has derived nine-tenths of its support from the bishop's friends, has extended to them the bread of life; and that, in fact, almost the very existence of those churches is owing to the efforts and munificence of those very persons, who are now said to be inferior to their brethren in zeal. God forbid, that the society

should be compelled to adopt the language of the prophet, "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me."

Nor is this diversity observable only in the local institutions of the diocese. It prevails also elsewhere. Of the nineteen patrons of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church, who belong to Pennsylvania, thirteen rank among the bishop's friends. Of the eleven life subscribers, nine are to be ranked among the bishop's friends and supporters. For these details, see the last triennial report of that institution.

These facts are not brought forward, to administer to vanity, or to procure adulation. The friends of the bishop know, that their exertions and liberality have not been proportioned to the providential blessings of God, nor to the spiritual wants of their needy brethren. Forced, however, to vindicate themselves from the charge of being inferior to their brethren on the other side, in zeal for the interests of religion and the church, they desire humbly to appeal to these facts, and to let the candid episcopalians of this diocese judge between them.

II. The next point to be examined is, the views of the respective parties.

1. Their views of doctrine. For the doctrines which they teach, the bishop and his friends appeal to the scripture as the foundation, and to the articles, homilies, and liturgy of the church, as furnishing their exposition of them—of man's native depravity, they say with the article, that "it standeth not in the following of Adam, but is the fault and corruption of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil." Of the necessity of grace to enable men to serve God, they teach that "no man has power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing, (or going before) him that he may have a good will, and working with him when he has that good will." In regard to the doctrine of justification, they maintain that "we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works and deservings." As authority for warning men against the perils of falling away from God, they inculcate, that after "we have received the Holy Ghost we may depart from grace given and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may arise again and amend our lives." They teach that the promises of God are to be received "in such wise as they be generally set forth in scripture; and in our doings, that will of God is to be followed which we have expressly declared unto us, in the word of God." In regard to the atonement, they are accustomed to preach, that "the offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and that there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone;" baptism, they avow, and inculcate to be, not only a sign of profession, and of initiation into the church, "but also a sign of

regeneration or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that are baptized rightly are grafted into the church : the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed ; faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God." In regard to the ministerial office, they are used to inculcate upon their people, in agreement with the language of the preface to the office of ordination, that "it is evident unto all men diligently reading holy scripture, and ancient authors, that from the apostles' times there have been these three orders of ministers in Christ's Church—bishops, priests, and deacons, which offices were evermore had in such reverend estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same ; and also by public prayer, with imposition of hands were approved, and admitted thereunto by lawful authority."

These are the doctrines of the bishop and his friends in relation to points upon which they are often represented as maintaining unsound and defective views. Here is their confession of faith on these topics. To the articles, the homilies, and liturgy, which they receive *ex animo*, they appeal, as expressing the doctrines to which they have solemnly engaged to conform. If they are pronounced unsound by their opponents in relation to the above stated points, they have the satisfaction of knowing that they are unsound in company with the prayer book, and the Bible. The religious views of the bishop's friends, which plainly resolve the salvation of the sinner into the mere favour and grace of God both as to its origin, and as to its application, and which lay the burden of the guilt of failing to attain it, on the shoulders of the impenitent and obstinate, are not perhaps enforced by them, with so much eloquence, energy, or talents, as are manifested by their opponents ; but are yet taught to the best of that humble ability, and of those plain qualifications which, in the diversity of his gifts, the Almighty has been pleased to vouchsafe to them. What are the peculiar opinions of our brethren, and how far they differ from these, I will not undertake to say. If they do differ, it will be perceived that they differ from the prayer book, the authorized expositor of the views of Episcopalians. If they do not differ, why is a war waged against the opinions of the bishop and his friends ?

2. In matters of policy, the two parties differ.

The opponents of the bishop are favourable to those plans of christian exertion, and benevolence, which tend to the amalgamation of episcopalians with other denominations of christians. The friends of the bishop desire general harmony with other persuasions of christians ; but are opposed to union with them, in any other case (but that of the Bible Society, in which several of them unite,) because they believe that collisions and difficulties will be the certain result of such amalgamations, when they extend to other matters ; and because, if they unite with one body of professed christians, they must with another, and they fear, lest in the practical operation of the principle, they may be

led to compromit, or put to hazard, any of the essential articles of our most holy faith. Hence they support their own exclusive institutions in preference to promiscuous ones, and leaving other denominations to pursue their own interests in their own way, they ask for liberty to do the same for themselves, without being charged by them, or by those of their own household, with intolerance, illiberality and bigotry.

Some of the clergy opposed to the bishop, are said to maintain, and act upon the principle of mingling religious services with ministers of other denominations, and of opening their pulpits to them. The result of this, in the opinion of the bishop and his friends, cannot but be injurious to the true interests of the church, and is in plain repugnance to a canon of the church. It is therefore discountenanced by them.

The introduction of extemporaneous prayers into the public services of the church, is another mark which distinguishes the bishop's opponents from his friends; the rubrical illegality of the practice, its actual inexpediency, and its injurious tendency to lessen respect for the prayer book in the minds of the people, are asserted by the latter, as the ground of their opposition to it.

The encouragement of the ministrations of men not ordained, by calling on them to lead the devotions, or to expound the scriptures, in prayer meetings, &c. &c. is another practice common to the party opposed to the bishop, and strongly resisted by him and his friends, as calculated by exciting self-conceit and pride to produce injurious effects upon the personal characters of the men so encouraged, especially if they be candidates for holy orders—to diminish respect for the ministerial office, and gradually to undermine it—and as tending in the end to divisions, distractions, and schisms in the church: views of the subject for which they appeal to the obvious workings of the human mind, and to the recorded experience of many who have tried the system.

Indisposition to submit to the control of that ecclesiastical authority which the church has established, and proneness to act independent of, or in opposition to the bishop, in matters not involving conscientious views, and wherein propriety would dictate that some regard should be had to his official character, if not to his personal feelings—constitute another trait in the general character of the bishop's opponents, of which all who are intimately acquainted with the recent history of the church in this state are aware. The establishment of episcopal societies in Philadelphia, and the employment of a missionary there, with neither of which he is allowed to have any connexion either direct, or indirect; the organization of an additional episcopal church in the same city, in the face of a Canon, and where it was not demanded by the necessities of the episcopalians, without consultation or advice with the bishop, and with the knowledge that if the congregation succeeds it must succeed at the expense, more or less, of one of the churches under the bishop's pastoral charge; and again, the recent attempt of the Rev. Mr. Ridgely to organize a con-

gregation at Frankford with the *avowed design* to increase their strength at the approaching Convention at Harrisburg, made against the known wishes of the reverend clergyman within whose parish Frankford is, and in the face of a canon express against it: these, among others, are some evidences of an indisposition on the part of those opposed to the bishop to submit to the control of ecclesiastical authority, and to yield a just and proper deference to the views and feelings of the bishop. The bishop himself is not the person to demand, nor are his friends and supporters the persons to yield, a blind and unqualified deference to his opinions and statements. But there is some degree of canonical obedience, and of official respect, independent of what personal regard and affection, or the veneration of age and dignity might ask, which they feel to be due to one, whose godly admonitions some of them have solemnly pledged themselves before God and his church to regard. That Rt. Rev. Father may boldly appeal to the whole course of his episcopacy in this diocese, which has lasted longer than the lives of most of his clerical opponents, in proof of its exemption from any thing dictatorial, or dogmatical, and from any interference with the canonical rights, or conscientious opinions of his clergy or laity. If ever moderation and power were wedded in the person and proceedings of any bishop, it has been the fact in regard to the venerable diocesan of Pennsylvania, against whom are now arrayed some, whom he may be said, almost without a figure, to have dandled on his knees. It was indeed to be hoped, that he who for half a century had been "the chariot and horseman" of our Israel—whose prayers and efforts may be said not only to have consecrated the first stone, which was laid in the foundation of the Episcopal Church in this country, but also to have been expended upon the structure, at every stage of its progress to the present moment; and who, as a wise master-builder, has erected upon the solid foundation, not hay stubble and straw, but the more precious and durable materials of gold, silver and precious stones: It was to be hoped, that *he* would have been allowed to lay down his revered and hoary head in peace, and not like a former patriarch, be constrained by troubles resulting from the dispositions and conduct of his own children, to say, "I will go down to the grave mourning." But the prospect before his dim and aged eye is dark and cloudy. And his arduous and toilsome career, seems likely to terminate, (like that of Moses when he had brought the Israelites to the banks of Jordan,) with a mind harassed by apprehensions of unceasing collisions, and almost prophetic of woes about to fall upon the church, so long the object of his interest, prayers and exertions. A new generation has sprung up around him; but among the individuals whom his opponents are now striving to seat in his chair, he sees no Joshua, full of the spirit of wisdom, on whom, like Moses, he can lay his hands, in any confidence that the permanent settlement of the church will be the result, under God, of the new systems of policy which may be established, and maintained. "Could it be supposed probable," said

this gray-haired father of the Church, at the Special Conventions as he stood before its members, pouring forth the dictates of half a century's experience, "could it be supposed probable that there will hereafter be a bishop of this diocese, who shall either openly oppose himself to the received properties of our communion, or endeavour to undermine them insidiously, and by degrees, heavy will be his responsibility. Should his talents be equal to the meditated undertaking, he may distract and divide the church, but he will not consummate his work; and the 'old paths will still be sought' by those who have walked in them, and to whom they have been endeared; and who may perhaps by a steady perseverance regain their rights, after experience of the result, and a manifestation of the spirit which produced it."

Having urged upon the Convention *piety* as manifested by a long perseverance in the profession of Christian obligation, and by a consistent life, and conversation—a proportionate measure of *sound theological learning*, and general information—and a *decided and consistent attachment and conformity* to the institutions of our church in doctrine, in worship, and in ecclesiastical constitution and government—as qualifications prominently desirable in the episcopal character, essential to any considerable usefulness in it, and the want of which would threaten extreme injury to the church within the diocese—well might he say with an utterance almost choked by the overpowering thought, that "could he foresee that during his episcopacy, either now or at any future time, the stated points would be either dismissed or disregarded, he would make some such request as that of Hagar in the wilderness, in reference to what had been so long an object of his anxieties, of his prayers, and of his exertions—'Let me not see the death of the child!'"

III. The proceedings of the two parties in relation to the attempt to elect an assistant bishop remain to be canvassed.

On the 1st of August 1826, the bishop issued his circular convening a special convention to consider the expediency of electing an assistant bishop of the diocese.

The course which the bishop's friends have pursued in relation to this subject is briefly this.

They never ventured to express to him any opinion on the subject, before he himself, voluntarily, and without solicitation, brought the subject before them in private intercourse, and asked their opinion as to the expediency of such a proceeding.

Being thus consulted by the bishop, they, as his friends, expressed their opinions on the subject that the church generally would appreciate the reasons of the measure if the proposal of it were to come from himself, but that there would be a reluctance to the giving of a beginning to it from the motive of respect to him.*

When the subject was thus brought before them, they, acting in

* See Journal of Special Convention, p. 29.

this matter as they had been forced to act in regard to other matters, by the exclusive proceedings of their brethren, consulted with each other in relation to the person to be brought forward as a candidate for the important station. A majority of them it was found united in favour of the pious, learned, sound, and consistent individual whom they afterwards supported at the election—who, they knew, would be acceptable to their venerable father in God from their previous habits of intimacy; and who, they believed, would pursue if elected, a course calculated to strengthen the stakes of our Zion, and to enlarge the place of her borders. By every honest and honourable means, the friends of the bishop endeavoured to promote the election of their candidate, and to make known his claims and merits to those who might very naturally be supposed to be ignorant of them. They adopted however, no electioneering tricks—they made no efforts to impose upon the ignorance of any one. They issued no defamatory circulars covered with so thin guise, as to leave the object beneath visible to almost every eye. Only one publication appeared on their side, and that was issued in self defence, to expose hastily adopted errors; and is not marked with a single word of open or concealed attack upon any one, or by any other spirit than one tempered by piety, prudence, and moderation.

In the appointment of deputies to the convention, the bishop's friends pursued no exclusive system—gave no instructions to them, as to the person for whom they should vote—excluded from the deputation no one person on account of his expressed opinions; but left every man to make up his views, in a free and unbiassed exercise of his mind—nor did the friends of the bishop create a fund, and proffer money to pay the expenses of distant deputies to the Convention. They despatched no emissary through the diocese to promote party purposes, and to excite the laity against the candidate supported by their brethren on the other side, by misrepresenting him as defective in his religious character and views. They republished no discourses of their candidate with party views, and for the promotion of party purposes. They freely urged their objections to the Rev. Mr. Meade, on the ground of his having long been considered as the head of a party in the church, of the well known opposition of his religious opinions and views of policy to those of the Rt. Rev. Bishop White, and of the comparative narrowness of his theological attainments; but they never questioned his personal piety any more than his popular abilities. They made no attempts to bring in newly organized churches into the Convention, with a view to enlarge the number of their friends on the floor of that house. They sought not to introduce a colored man into that body, whose vote would have decided the election of the Assistant Bishop. They offered no premeditated insults to our venerable bishop. They arranged no plans by which the lay members should be so disposed in the house, as to be under the direction of some one of their clergy, to be guided as to the manner of their votes on important subjects. They brought no person

forward as a deputy to the Convention, who had not a constitutional right to a seat therein, when his certificate of appointment was made out.

When an attempt to restore harmony, and allay irritation, was suggested by the Rev. Mr. Meade of Virginia, both the friends of the bishop and their candidate seconded the attempt most cordially, and stood ready to pledge themselves to the measure by which that object was to be effected.

Since the last Special Convention, they have not withstood in any case, the wishes of any clergyman, voting with them, to leave the diocese, nor used any persuasions or means to induce them to remain. They have, in fact, engaged in the service of a missionary society, over which they have control, one of those very clergymen who voted against them on that occasion, and retained others of the same description in its employment.

But it is time to turn to the other side of this subject, and to show very briefly what have been the proceedings of the bishop's opponents in relation to the subject of the election of an Assistant Bishop.

1. They have published an irritating circular to the laity, full of erroneous statements, and unsound reasonings, with a few pretty plain insinuations of intrigue, &c. &c. against the bishop's friends in relation to the measure.

2. They have published and sanctioned a circular under the signature of Hooker, full of half disguised personalities, containing the bold avowal, that a *rich* candidate ought to be preferred to a *poor* one, they being equal in other respects, and so completely marked by an unchristian temper and spirit, that the author has never ventured to avow himself, and his friends have been as studious to repress inquiries on the subject as they were to circulate the production among the episcopalians of the diocese.

3. They appointed a man to the Convention, who, at the time of his appointment, was not even a member of the episcopal church which he represented.

4. They created a fund to pay the expenses of the delegates who came down from the country and voted for them.

5. A reverend clergyman, it is well known, travelled through the diocese, poisoning the minds of the laity against the Rev. Dr. Wilson, accusing him of not being sound in the faith, of holding erroneous sentiments, &c. &c.

6. They organized new congregations, and attempted to introduce them into the Convention, in order to strengthen their party among the laity.

7. They changed their deputations in many cases, so as to leave out, as far as possible, all the old men who had been accustomed to attend the Convention, and to introduce younger and more flexible materials in their place.

8. They attempted to introduce a colored clergyman into the Con-

vention, whose vote would have decided the election; and then, to avoid the public notoriety of such an act, the very author of the motion sought to have it expunged from the journal of its proceedings.

9. They re-published an old discourse of the Rev. Mr. Meade, the mere party design of which proceeding was so obvious, as, it is said, to have extorted from Mr. Meade an expression of disgust. The anecdote is current, that Mr. M. upon taking up a copy of the sermon, observed, as he read the title page—"a sermon preached by the Rev. William Meade of Virginia, and" (alluding to the electioneering object of the new edition) "published by the Devil."

10. They aimed to destroy in the Convention, all freedom of voting, by preconcerting in private meetings the manner in which their friends should vote on all material questions, and by arranging their clergy in such situations in the Convention among the laity, as to enable them to influence and direct their votes; a circumstance noticed by many, who attended the sittings of the Convention as mere spectators of its proceedings.

11. They have refused, since the Convention, to accede to a proposal originating with Mr. Meade himself, for the promotion of at least temporary peace and harmony, by postponing the election during Bishop White's life; when the bishop's friends stood ready for the attainment of that desirable object to accede to that measure.

12. They encouraged and countenanced a reverend gentleman, a missionary at Green Bay, of the General Missionary Society, who was in Philadelphia on a visit of business, in relation to his mission, to remain, and claim his seat in the Special Convention, to the manifest detriment, and almost total ruin of the mission.

13. And finally they have issued a circular, signed by Messrs. Boyd, Bedell, Dupuy, Riley, and Robbins, of which the following is a copy. The circular was voluntarily placed in my hands, but a few days ago.

"CIRCULAR.—[*Confidential.*]

"The undersigned beg leave to address you upon the important subject which is known at this time to agitate the churches in this diocese, and which it is expected will be a prominent subject of discussion at the next State Convention. Our objects are to give you such information as we think will be interesting; to offer such considerations as we deem important; and to propose a few questions to which we hope you will reply. It is expected that *the members of the committee, throughout the state*, will take the matter into serious and deliberate consideration, and answer this communication as soon as they conveniently can.

"We are sorry to state that the Rev. Mr. Meade has absolutely declined being considered a candidate for the office of an assistant bishop in this diocese. This information will no doubt surprise and grieve his friends. Such, however, is the will of God, and we doubt not that our respected brother of Virginia has come to the above conclusion after much prayer and painful deliberation. Let us submit to the disappointment, and still put our trust in the Lord. Though God may have other service for brother Meade, he will not suffer his own cause to fail. We are *associated* not for the purpose of elevating an individual, but for *the defence of truth and piety: for principles and not men*. While we continue to act in the fear of the Lord, and keep our eye steadfastly fixed upon the end,

even his glory, we have nothing to fear. If our hopes are realized, we will praise him; if not, we will still have the consolation to know that our intentions were pure.

"The proposal to postpone all further consideration of the election of an assistant bishop, which was submitted by the Rev. Mr. Meade to a few persons on both sides of the question, has not been acceded to. No pledge has been given, or stipulation made to postpone the election. The whole matter rests precisely where it was left at the adjournment of the late Special Convention. By a reference to the journal, it will be seen that the subject is referred to the Annual Convention, to meet at Harrisburg in May next, at which time it must of necessity be acted upon.

"We confidently expect that the brethren will come to the next Convention prepared to act on the important matter which will then be brought before them, with the same unanimity which was discovered on the former occasion; that they will lay aside private and personal partialities, and proceed in all their future deliberations under the influence of the *pledge* which was given when we were last together.

"Circumstances have come to our *knowledge* which convince us that the friends of Dr. Wilson are making every effort to secure a majority in the next Convention; and that no expedient will be left untried to alter the character of the lay delegation from the churches which were opposed to him. Let us also employ all lawful means to keep the advantage which we have already obtained; and if possible, to increase our majority by procuring the appointment of an additional number of delegates *who will agree with us in principle*. In all probability some other and more popular candidate will be selected in the place of Dr. Wilson, before or at the time of the next Convention. Whoever it may be it matters not. *Our objections are not so much to the man, as to the opinions and policy which it is intended to support.*

"It will not only be necessary when we meet at Harrisburg to make another nomination in the place of the Rev. Mr. Meade, but we must also be prepared to proceed to an election. Under such circumstances we need hardly to suggest to our brethren the importance of having a full delegation. Each church is entitled to send three representatives. We would recommend that these should be chosen as soon as possible, both to avoid the probability of intrigue, and that the *deputies may be informed in season of all the bearings* of the important question upon which they will be called to deliberate and to decide. **IN ALL CASES WHERE IT IS NOT PERFECTLY CONVENIENT FOR THE DELEGATES TO DEFRAY THEIR OWN EXPENSES, WE THINK IT PROPER THAT THEY SHOULD BE PAID, AND PROVISION TO THAT EFFECT WILL BE MADE.**

"We would make one more suggestion. It is thought highly important in the present state of things, that the same persons who attended the Special Convention, and who *remain of the same mind*, should in all cases (if practicable) attend at Harrisburg; and if they cannot, that other delegates should be chosen by the churches in *whom entire confidence can be placed*.

"We would earnestly recommend to the brethren throughout the state, to make the choice of an Assistant Bishop a matter of special prayer. To this end we would propose to set apart at least one hour on every intervening Lord's day, between this time and the sitting of the Convention.

"We will thank you, in your reply, to answer as far as you can, the following questions:—

- "1. Who will attend the next Convention as delegates, and from what churches?
- "2. What amount will be necessary to defray the expenses incurred by the attendance of delegates from your neighbourhood?
- "3. Can any money be raised by a congregational collection, or otherwise, to be applied to paying the expenses of delegates?

"4. Have you any information which you think it important to communicate to us?"

"Please to answer this letter as soon as you possibly can."

"Yours respectfully and sincerely,

GEORGE BOYD, Chairman.

G. T. BEDELL.

CHARLES M. DUPUY,

JOSEPH S. RILEY,

SAMUEL J. ROBBINS, Sec'y.

} Committee
of
Correspondence, &c.

Philadelphia, 22d January, 1827.

It is painful to be compelled to make strictures on this production of our brethren, but not only the interests of truth—the characters of those assailed, imperiously demand it. By one sweeping clause the friends of Dr. Wilson, including the venerable bishop himself, one half of the clergy of the diocese, and a large body of the respectable laity of our church, are placed under the ban of an ASSOCIATION formed not for the temporary "purpose of elevating an individual, but for the defence of truth, and piety." But let us view the propositions and statements of this extraordinary production in their order.

It appears from it,

1. *That there is an organized committee, headed by the five gentlemen named above, extending throughout the state.* How long has this committee been established? By whom was it appointed? What are its objects? Of whom does it consist? These are questions of some interest to the Episcopalians of this diocese. If the church is to be managed by a cabal of clergy and laity, let us at least know our rulers. The aid of their pious example might perhaps induce the bishop and his friends to lay aside their hostility to truth and piety, and thus do away the necessity of preserving such a committee in existence.

2. But let us look at the object of this ASSOCIATION: we have it stated on the authority of their "Committee of Correspondence" in these terms: "*We are associated not for the purpose of elevating an individual, but for the defence of truth and piety: for principles, not men.*" Now who are the assailants of truth and piety, against whom this formidable rampart has been reared? The only opponents referred to in the circular are the friends of the Rev. Dr. Wilson. And who are they? The Right Rev. Bishop White, half of the clergy of this diocese, and a very large number of the most respectable, liberal, pious, and influential gentlemen of the laity. Once, and in a public paper, the Rev. Mr. Bedell could say, "to no person am I indebted for more marked kindness than to Bishop White."* Less than a year ago he could be deeply wounded by a mere *imputation* of disrespect towards that venerable individual, and could pen and publish the assertion that the charge of disrespect "came well nigh to undermine his health." Now he puts his name to a printed circular, in which he avows himself to be *associated* with others for the purpose of defend-

* Philadelphia Recorder for June 10, 1826.

ing the interests of truth and piety, against the bishop and his friends. Even after this circular had been issued, and knowing himself to be a member of an *association* formed to defend piety and truth, against the assaults of the bishop and his friends, and to oppose their opinions and policy, the Rev. Mr. Boyd could write this statement—"if the venerable bishop of this diocese never has occasion to complain of others for disturbing his peace, more than *me*, his mind need never lose its wonted quiet."^{*}

The war here waged in this circular, is a *war of extermination*. It appears that an organized opposition exists—not an association banded together for a temporary purpose—but one of a more permanent character and object. Our brethren have inscribed on one side of their banner "principles, not men"—and on the reverse, "the defence of truth and piety." No political party—no array of soldiers, could avow a more determined purpose, or breathe a more martial spirit, than this "association" against the bishop and those who act with him, under the direction of three of his clergy, eminent for their professions of liberality, piety, and love of God and man.

3. But look to the circular again. It appears from the fourth paragraph, that the association is under some "*pledge* given when they were last together." And this pledge seems to have been that they would lay aside private and personal partialities, and act with unanimity in prosecuting the great object of their association; which is to defend truth and piety against the bishop and his friends, to sustain their own principles—and to oppose the opinions and policy of their right reverend father in God. It appears then, that there exists not only a party in the church in this state opposed to Bishop White—but a party organized—a party pledged—a party headed by brethren Boyd, Bedell, and Dupuy, of the clergy, and Mr. Robbins and Mr. Riley of the laity. I do not mean to question the *right* of these reverend clergy, and respectable laymen, to organize such a party; but it is of importance for the Episcopalians of this state, to know the fact. Those gentlemen assuredly are free to associate together against the bishop, for the purpose of putting down his opinions, and principles; but fairness and consistency would seem to require that, whilst thus *privately* banded together in opposition to him, they should not publicly profess to feel for him quite so much love, and reverence, and veneration; for ordinary and plain people often find it difficult to reconcile public professions of regard with private acts of hostility.

4. The next paragraph contains a word of exhortation, grounded on a cause of alarm.

The cause of alarm is, that the five gentlemen who have issued this manifesto, have had circumstances brought to their *knowledge*, (not merely their belief, but their actual knowledge,) "that the friends of Dr. Wilson are making every effort to secure a majority in the next Convention, and that no expedient will be left untried to alter the character of the lay delegation from the churches which were

* Church Register for March 30, 1827. .

opposed to him." This statement is unqualifiedly erroneous. Those five gentlemen could not have *known*, (observe they affirm that they *knew* the fact.) that the friends of Dr. Wilson were making such efforts as are alluded to; for the plain reason that when that circular was penned and printed—no such effort had been made by Dr. Wilson's friends. They had not then penned a line nor stirred a step in the business of the election of an assistant bishop. Their only act will be noticed in the sequel. Of course it must be inferred that the statement appears to have been made only to produce excitement, and to serve as ground for the following exhortation, "let us also employ all lawful means to keep the advantage we have already gained, and if possible to increase our majority by procuring the appointment of an additional number of delegates *who will agree with us in principle.*" This is what would be called in military tactics, a proposal to carry the war into the enemy's country. The bishop's friends are to be turned out of the deputation to the next Convention, wherever it can be effected, and the friends of this Committee of Correspondence are to be substituted in their place. Here, too, is a *new* qualification for the office of deputy to the State Convention, viz. *agreement in principle* with Messrs. Boyd, Bedell, Dupuy, Riley, and Robbins.

Here is a bold and earnest exhortation rung through the diocese of Pennsylvania, by the committee of correspondence of an association avowedly hostile to the opinions and principles of the bishop of the State, into the ears of an organized corps of adherents to labour to put into the delegation to the next convention, wherever they can, men inimical to the bishop, principled against him, and ready to be pledged to the designs and measures of a party, not formed for any temporary purpose, but to carry on a lasting war of principle against that venerable prelate, and his supporters and friends. And from whom does this tocsin of party issue? From three *clergymen*, and two laymen. Look at it in another view. Here are three reverend clergymen, not only endeavouring to sow and cultivate the seeds of hostility in the minds of men of their own profession, but thrusting an intermeddling hand into the appropriate concerns of the laity; aiming to bend the laymen of Pennsylvania to their private purposes, and to control and manage them. These reverend gentlemen, doubtless, *act* upon the principle to which they exhort their friends, and what is the inference? why that the vestries of their churches over which these gentlemen have charge, are mere *tools* of theirs, and send to the convention such persons only as it suits them to have appointed. Again, Mr. Bedell and Mr. Boyd, are publicly spoken of as candidates for the office of assistant bishop. And here they are presented to us, actively engaged in electioneering for themselves; formed into a committee of correspondence to promote their own advancement in the church, and exhorting their adherents throughout the diocese, to procure the appointment of an additional number of delegates to the next convention, who *agreeing with them in principle*, will not, to say the least, be

unlikely to unite in effecting the elevation of one or the other of them to the high station of the episcopacy. Even in political elections, it is not common for the candidate for any office to appear as the public champion of his own claims, or the prominent director of the schemes by which he is to succeed. These matters are usually left to his friends. I lay down my pen to sigh over the painful *contrast*, to that dignified course which this circular shows to be taken by the reverend gentlemen who are proposed as candidates for a most distinguished and reponsible office in the church of Christ.

Again, these five gentlemen aver, "*our objections are not so much to the man, as to the opinions and policy which it is intended to support.*" Let this be well observed. It is a most weighty declaration. It is an open acknowledgment, that Dr. Wilson was not opposed at the late Special Convention, by these five gentlemen, because he was not a popular preacher, or because they thought him destitute of the sociable qualities which they deemed essential to success in the episcopal office, but on account of the opinions and policy of Dr. Wilson's supporters. The former were the points on which publicly they descanted with such energy. The latter, it is now asserted, were the true, and real motives of their opposition. No matter whom the friends of Bishop White may put forward as their candidate for the office of Assistant Bishop; let him be as popular as Whitfield, as pious as a Leighton, as learned as a Horsley, as meek as a Porteous, as polite as a Heber, and as zealous as a Paul himself, they need not anticipate any support, any agreement, any union, any countenance, from their opponents, unless their candidate will agree to conform his religious opinions and his views of policy to what shall be dictated and chalked out to him by Mr. Boyd, Mr. Bedell, Mr. Dupuy, Mr. Riley, and Mr. Robbins. Are the episcopalians of Pennsylvania prepared to submit to a species of dictation like this?

5. But observe, again, the language of these three clergymen in this letter of instruction, to the churches of the diocese. "We would recommend that these (the deputies to the Convention at Harrisburg) should be chosen as soon as possible, both to avoid the *probability of intrigue*, (physician! heal thyself,) and that the deputies may be *informed in season* of all the bearings of the important question upon which they will be called to deliberate and decide." Here, in the first place, is a bold intimation of intentions to intrigue, brought against the friends of Dr. Wilson, by the five gentlemen who have signed this circular, and who, in the very same sentence, propose plans and offer suggestions, which, if they do not bear the character of intrigue, of private plotting to control the proceedings of the approaching Convention, and to promote a particular object, I do not know the meaning of the word. What freedom of discussion, or what freedom of determination, or what freedom of voting, can take place at that Convention, if the members who compose it, are to be placed under pledges, engagements, and all the machinery of previous teaching, and drilling, as regards the manner in which they are to vote, the

questions they are to decide, the persons they are to vote for, and the matters they are to oppose? It is, indeed, a monstrous heavy responsibility which these five gentlemen have taken upon their shoulders, to say nothing of its presumption, of its inconsistency with the profession of three of them, of its indelicacy as regards the two who are candidates for the bishopric, or of its utter incompatibility with their high professions of superior holiness and zeal, and purity of christian character. As a christian, an episcopalian, and a freeman, I blush at this proceeding of my brethren. Again, the committee of correspondence direct, that the delegates should *be chosen as soon as possible* after the receipt of the committee's *instructions*, which are dated the 22d of January 1827. Did not this committee know, that the new vestries which are usually chosen on Easter Monday, are the proper persons to appoint the delegates, and that though deputies might be appointed by the old vestries, yet that the new vestries have the legal power to put in others if they please? Let each vestry know, that after the election of vestrymen at Easter, they who are then elected can appoint as deputies to the Convention, just such persons belonging to the vestry or to the congregation as they please, no matter whom the old vestry had selected. Whether the committee of correspondence omitted to make known this fact, through ignorance, or carelessness, or design, I leave my readers to conjecture for themselves.

6. But if shame should mantle the cheeks of piety on account of the above details, how must she hide her head under the following disclosure. If the preceding statements bear the appearance of intrigue, what shall be said of this?

"In all cases where it is not perfectly convenient for the delegates to defray their own expenses, we think it proper that they should be paid, AND PROVISION TO THAT EFFECT WILL BE MADE."

Now to what does this statement amount? Plainly to this.—That Mr. Boyd, Mr. Bedell, Mr. Dupuy, Mr. Riley, and Mr. Robbins, have *engaged*, under their signatures, to pay the expenses of certain delegates to the Convention at Harrisburg, to whom it may not be perfectly convenient to defray their own expenses. But is this a general offer to all the deputies who may be in that situation? Oh! no! To whom then is it made? To those delegates, and those only, who "shall agree in principle" with those five gentlemen, those who will oppose the principles and policy of Bishop White, and will support the views and opinions of Messrs. Boyd, Bedell, Dupuy, Riley and Robbins, those in whom these five gentlemen can place *entire confidence*, those who will surrender their judgments, and wills, to the dictation and direction of "the committee of correspondence," who have signed the circular. The *language* of the offer, is not, it is true, "come to the Convention and vote for me, or with me, and I will pay your expenses;" but the *meaning*, and *spirit* of it, reach to that extent. The individuals who may receive this money, will receive it, not because they are merely coming to the Convention, but because they are coming to

the Convention for a *particular purpose*, and under a *particular pledge*, and to act in a *particular way*. And the proof of this is the fact, that the committee direct that men of that description only should be sent to the Convention; men who will agree with them in principle; men in whom they can confide. I do not profess to be adequately versed in those distinctions which, it is necessary to know in order to say what constitutes bribery in a *legal* construction, but I do not hesitate to avow the opinion, that the SPIRIT OF BRIBERY pervades this offer of money to pay the expenses of the delegates, because it is an offer made to such of them only as are expected to vote in a way agreeable to those who make the offer.

And who are the persons that make this offer of money to the distant delegates? Let modesty hide her head—let piety blush—let religion be clothed in black—let the church of this diocese tremble—at the annunciation, that two of them are now before the public, as candidates for the office of assistant bishop of this state. It is to be observed, that this offer is made by them as a committee of an association. And here we learn another object of that association—the collection of money, to pay the expenses of delegates in whom entire confidence can be placed—which money is at the disposal of these five gentlemen, to be applied to that object. If each vestry paid the expenses of its delegates, nobody could object; for the deputies would then come to the convention, and act as independently as if their expenses were paid out of their own pockets. If the State Convention had made provision to pay the expenses of the deputies who attend it, no suspicion of their acting under an undue influence could be indulged. If any private member of any congregation should, voluntarily, and without solicitation, offer to pay the expenses of any deputy, without binding him to act or vote in any particular way, no reason could exist against it. But, far, very far, from either of these cases, is the proceeding of our five brethren in this matter. *They pledge themselves to pay the expenses of delegates who shall agree with them in principle, and in whom they can confide*; for such alone, (as far as *their power*, and wishes, and instruction extend,) are to be allowed to come to the convention. Now, I ask any candid, and unbiassed, and conscientious man, to say, whether those deputies, who receive money in this way, on these grounds, and from these gentlemen, can be said to act and vote in the convention with minds perfectly free; and whether, by this previous offer of money to pay their expenses, there has not been an undue influence exerted over a part of that convention? And whether the recipients of this proffered money will not be expected, on the very ground of having accepted it, to vote and act according to the views and wishes of those who have given it. If this proposal to pay the expenses of their delegates, and this attempt to raise a fund to do it with, have been entered into by the signers of this circular, through ignorance of the unfair and unbecoming nature of the transaction, much are they to be pitied for their simplicity of

mind, and the obtuseness of their moral feeling—much have they yet to learn of the *pure* principles of the gospel of Christ; and much of the native darkness of the human mind must be confessed still to hang round their consciences, calling for our prayers that it may be removed. If, however, (I hardly dare to credit the possibility of the thing,) knowing the real nature of the transaction, they have yet ventured upon this career, how desperate must be the infatuation with which they are pursuing a party purpose, when it can blind their moral perceptions to such a fearful degree.

7. But let us proceed with our review of this circular. A further item of instruction propounded by the committee of correspondence, is this: "It is thought highly important, in the present state of things, that the same persons who attended the Special Convention, *and who remain of the same mind*, should, in all cases, (if practicable,) attend at Harrisburgh; and if they cannot, that other delegates should be chosen by the churches, *in whom entire confidence can be placed*." Is there any other reason to be imagined, why it was thought by the authors of this instruction, to be so "highly important," that the same persons should be re-appointed to the Stated Convention, except that they had been already indoctrinated and drilled, and knew how to wear the yoke, or that they were already under the pledge spoken of in this circular? Observe, too, the caution of this vigilant committee: those of them only are to come, "*who remain of the same mind*." If any continue to think as they did at the Special Convention, then they are fit and proper delegates, good men, and true. If, however, they have, in the interim, changed their minds, it is gently hinted to the adherents of the committee, that such persons had better stay quietly at home, and "*other delegates be chosen, in whom entire confidence can be placed*." Now, let the laymen of this diocese look calmly at this topic. Here are three *clergymen*, issuing their instructions to the vestries of the churches, as to the persons whom they shall send to the approaching Convention. I would particularly invite to this matter, the attention of the gentleman, (supposed to be a member of the Rev. Mr. Bedell's congregation,) who, on the 26th of August, 1826, addressed the episcopalians of this state, in a circular, under the signature of "A Fellow Layman," and who seemed then so sensibly to feel the oppressive influence of the clergy, and so pathetically warned the laity against their aggressions. If he has not changed his mind since the late Special Convention, perhaps his rector will *allow* of his re-appointment to the Convention at Harrisburgh; but if he has, the mark of exclusion is upon *him*, as well as upon others—his eye shall not rest on the capitol at Harrisburgh, on the 8th of May next. Now, can he, or any one else, point to an instance, in which the clerical friends of Bishop White have ever interfered so pointedly, so improperly, so grossly, with the rights and privileges of the laity, as has been done in this case by his own pastor, the Rector of St. Andrew's, and his two reverend associates? If clerical usurpations are to be dreaded by the laity, let the contents of this circular show from

which of the two parties they are most likely to issue. I will venture to assert, that the whole history of the church in this state—nay, the whole history of the church in this country, will not supply a parallel to the barefaced dictation to the laity, and unbecoming intermeddling with their appropriate concerns, which have been manifested by the reverend signers of this letter of instruction. What had become of the spirit of their profession? What had become of the spirit of their Master, when they put their names to this manifesto? Had their success in raising the prejudices of the laity at the Special Convention, and controlling their opinions and votes, so intoxicated their minds, as to make them imagine it was only necessary for them to say to this one, go, and he goeth—and to another, come, and he cometh—and to their servants, do this, and they do it? The Right Rev. Bishop White has been fifty years a clergyman of this diocese, and forty of those years its bishop; and yet, clothed with the united authority of rector and bishop, he has never, during half a century, ventured so far to lord it over God's heritage, as to take so dictatorial and intermeddling a step, as the one here taken by these youthful aspirants to the mitre which is just dropping from his head.

3. Once more: I solicit your attention to the four questions with which this surprising document concludes. Turn to the circular and read them carefully. Now ask yourself, why do these five gentlemen wish to know who are to be the delegates, before the time of the meeting arrives, unless it be that in the language of one of their former supporters "they may count the noses,"* and calculate the issue of the election, or that they may give them that *seasonable* information referred to in their circular? Ordinary readers might infer that the lay deputies to the approaching Convention, cannot be fitted for the duties of that appointment, until they have received a proper diploma of instruction from Mr. Boyd, Mr. Bedell, Mr. Dupuy, Mr. Riley and Mr. Robbins.

Having been intrusted with the disbursement of the funds of the association, it is very easy to perceive why the committee of correspondence are so desirous of having the second and third of these questions answered. It might be an interesting problem to investigate—How many missionaries in this diocese would the fund at the disposal of this committee have maintained for the last year? or how many Indian children might it have enabled the General Missionary Society to educate at Green Bay? or how many bibles it might have aided in distributing? or how many idolatrous heathen it might have been instrumental in recalling from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God? But as these speculations cannot be pursued without an accurate knowledge of the precise amount of the monies contributed, I leave them to the *evening* meditations of the reverend members of the committee.

It is a curious circumstance, that throughout this circular signed by three clergymen, and probably penned by the chairman, there is not

* See the circular of "a fellow layman."

the most distant allusion to the possibility of Dr. Wilson's friends being actuated by sincere motives, or pious principles in supporting him for the episcopate. The only reference to their religious characters is the intimation that they would probably *intrigue*, to pervert the laity to their views. And the only reference to their opinions and policy, is, in general terms, to denounce them as matters against which the committee object, and to represent them, by implication, as so inimical to "truth and piety," as to require an association to be formed as a rampart against them. It would indeed be a dismal estimate, which any person, having no other knowledge on the subject than what this circular supplies, would form of the character of bishop White and his friends. It was not to be expected that our brethren would laud us; but I think my readers will agree with me in opinion, when they recollect the facts published in a former part of this address, that without violating their consciences, or infringing the truth, it might have been hinted by the committee, that we were not reprobates from the faith of Christ, outcasts of society, or entirely devoid of at least an outward anxiety for the promotion of religion, the welfare of the church, and the salvation of men. So far as the Rt. Rev. bishop White is concerned, such an acknowledgment was the more to be expected, because of the peculiar attitude in respect to him in which the Signers of this Circular have stood. The Rev. Mr. Boyd, as is well known, was once a most zealous upholder of the bishop's general views and policy, and an applauder of his character. The Rev. Mr. Bedell has often distinguished himself by his affectionate adulation of the bishop, both in public and in private, from the pulpit and the press. The Rev. Mr. Dupuy was baptized and confirmed by the bishop, received the sacramental elements from his hands, was brought up in his parish, received from him the ministerial commission, and has always been the bishop's avowed friend and supporter, until the middle of last summer. How long, or how intimately Mr. Riley and Mr. Robbins have been acquainted with the bishop, I am not aware; but as they have lived some time in Philadelphia, I should imagine long enough to have enabled them to unite with their reverend associates in a moderate expression of praise: And the latter of these two gentlemen, might, surely, have borne testimony to the mild forbearance of the bishop, if his memory had but casually reverted to the transactions of the late Special Convention in Philadelphia.

That you may perceive the different spirit which prevails among the bishop's friends and supporters, I extract the following passages from a private letter received from several of them in the course of last month.

Speaking of their object in opposing the party hostile to the bishop in the diocese, they say—"Our sole object is to prevent the control of the concerns of the church being thrown into the hands of those, whose views and policy, whatever be their personal piety and zeal, are calculated not to strengthen the stakes of our Zion, but to weaken

them. We do not question the piety of the motives, nor the integrity of the characters of those who are opposed to us. God forbid that we should do so. But of the obvious *tendency*, and the prospective *consequences* of their sentiments and policy, we may, without any violation of charity, express an opinion. We believe them to be radically subversive of the true interests of the church; and this belief constitutes the single ground of our opposition to their schemes, and of our efforts and prayers, that those schemes may be frustrated."

Again they say "the *tendency* of the views, and policy of our opponents, (we judge charitably of their motives) is, to amalgamate episcopalians with other denominations of christians; thus laying the foundation (we think) not of harmony, but of lasting discord,—to overthrow the ministerial office by encouraging the ministrations of unordained men—to introduce into the church, the peculiarities of calvanism or of methodism—to establish, and cherish insubordination to episcopal authority; and to overthrow our unrivalled liturgy by the introduction of extemporaneous effusions into the public services of the church."

The letter contains no intimations, of the opposite party being engaged in *intrigues*—no statement of any organized association pledged to carry on a lasting war against their brethren—no suggestion to the churches to send men as delegates who will agree with them in principles—no intimation to réappoint precisely the same persons who attended the Special Convention, provided they remain of the *same mind*—no instructions to collect money, and no offers of a pecuniary nature to induce deputies of a particular description to come to Harrisburg and vote with them.

The line of policy recommended is thus set forth to view:—

"That there should be a full deputation from each church.

"That the deputation should in every case consist of able, prudent, zealous men, the old and tried friends of religion of the church.

"That the person to be brought forward as our candidate, should be fixed upon after we get to Harrisburg.

"That provision be made by each vestry for the expenses of its deputies, where such a measure may be necessary.

"That there be a meeting of the friends of the church at Harrisburg, on — day, at — place, to confer with each other on matters connected with the Convention."

The rest of the letter is occupied with a history of the proposal of the Rev. Mr. Meade, to postpone, for the sake of peace and harmony, the election of an Assistant Bishop, during Bishop White's life—and some statements and reasonings, respecting the labours of the bishop and his friends, to promote the interests and advancement of the church in this diocese. The letter concludes thus—

"Let us have at Harrisburg, a free, full, wise, and independent body of the real friends and lovers of religion, and the church. The vessel demands prudent, experienced, forecasting pilots during the existing storm; and without these, she is in manifest peril of being

wrecked. That catastrophe may be prevented by our prayers and efforts under God. Let us do our duty faithfully, and zealously, and leave the event to the control of Him who has promised to be with his church to the end of time."

I owe an apology perhaps to the gentlemen who transmitted this letter, for venturing, without their permission, to place these extracts from it before the public. My desire to enlighten the episcopalians of the diocese upon the character of the two parties in the church, must plead my excuse. Every candid episcopalian will appreciate not only the forbearing spirit which marks its contents, but the motive which has induced the friends of the bishop not to blaze abroad through a printed circular the distractions of the diocese, but to disseminate their views and statements through the medium of a private letter. But the contents of that letter are such as deserve to be known not merely to a few of the bishop's friends, but to the whole body of the members of the church in this state; and I rejoice at the opportunity which this address has afforded me of laying the substance of it before their view. Let the tone, and spirit, and purport of it be contrasted with those which pervade the circular of the five gentlemen on the other side, and whether men of piety, in our own church, or out of it, be the judges, the bishop's friends may safely abide by their decision upon the comparative character of the two documents.

I have now brought this painful discussion to an end. In offering these views and statements to your notice and knowledge, I am actuated by the single desire of preventing you from being led away by misrepresentation, prejudice, or ignorance, and of rescuing the bishop and his friends from the oft reiterated charges of want of true religion, hostility to vital piety, disregard of the spiritual necessities of their brethren, and defective views and characters in their ministerial profession. I have no other interest in the existing contest than yourselves, no personal ends to attain. The facts and circumstances which have been laid before you, would have been most gladly kept in that darkness to which so many of them are allied, had not imperious duty demanded some vindication of the bishop and his friends (of whom I am proud to be one) from aspersions which are so often heaped upon them; and had not the professions and efforts of his opponents been found to be so successful, in infusing prejudices into the minds of those whose situations preclude them from opportunities of detecting inconsistency, and learning the truth.

The bishop and his friends have never, hitherto, brought their affairs before that episcopal public before which I have now placed them, with these facts and reasonings in their hands. They are fully prepared, I doubt not, to abide by the decision; and I put it to any honest man, to say, whether the circular of their opponents, accidentally, as it were, brought to the light, did not require some exposition of the ground on which the two parties stand, and their respective proceedings in the important affair now before the diocese.

However that affair may be decided, there was some necessity for preventing the episcopalians of this state from groping their way to a decision of it in the dark. I do not hesitate to express the belief, that a large number of those who have thus arrayed themselves against the bishop and his friends, have been led on to do it by the infusion of prejudices into their minds, and by suppositions and representations which are entirely groundless. Nor do I for a moment imagine, that the proceedings above detailed will be generally either approved, or sanctioned, by those clergy out of the state, who are understood to belong to the same class as those within it, some of whose views and acts have been disclosed.

Ample allowance is readily made for the irritation which division of sentiment upon important points usually produces in the minds, and betrays in the conduct, of opposing parties. Some of the facts stated in the course of these remarks rest upon accessible evidence, some upon individual assertions, and some upon current report. Nothing has been stated, but what is fully believed to be true. You may throw out of view, however, every thing which comes under the last two heads, and enough will remain to enable you to determine upon the respective characters of the two divisions in the church. Let it be remembered, that the bishop's friends have made no professions of superior piety and zeal over their brethren. They know and lament their own deficiencies. But, under existing circumstances, it is believed, they may humbly claim, as to the exhibition of religious sincerity, and christian principles, at least an equality with their opponents.

Whether our venerable father in God, will bring forward the subject of the election of an assistant bishop, at Harrisburgh, or whether he will suggest the expediency of postponing it, on account of the obvious diversity of sentiment in the diocese, is a point, on which, without doubt, his decision will be made with that due regard to prudence, and his own responsibility, which usually characterize his determinations. The election of a person as his assistant, so opposed to him in sentiment, in policy, and in feeling, as either of the individuals who are spoken of by his opponents as candidates for that high office, would place this diocese before the country as "a house divided against itself;" introduce, as it were, into his very family, an unacceptable associate; be the harbinger of permanent distraction and discord; and rivet the chain of party spirit upon the church, if we may judge from the character of their circular, to the latest generation. Should such an event occur, this veteran upholder of the church may yet live to see his fondest anticipations blasted, by the commencement of a system, destined, in the end, to unsettle and weaken, if not to overturn, this part of the christian building. Let, therefore, every episcopalian, seriously, and in the fear of God, determine where his duty lies in the existing crisis; and, without regard to the bold dictations, or interested counsels, of any committee of correspondence, however respectable its members, come forth to the support of the church, against these misguided and secret attempts to

obliterate her landmarks, with that meekness, decision, temperance, caution, and zeal, which become their characters, as christians, and as churchmen.

There is one point, and but one, in the circular of Messrs. Boyd, Bedell, Dupuy, Riley, and Robbins, in which the friends of the bishop can unite with them, and that is, the recommendation to make the subject of the election of an assistant bishop a subject of special prayer. If ever there were a time in this diocese, when it became episcopalians to cry mightily to God, in behalf of "the vine which his right hand hath planted," it is *now*, when three clergymen, and two laymen, seconded by an organized association, and a committee throughout the state, have waged against the opinions and policy of the bishop and his supporters, a war of extermination; and having represented them as not only so destitute of, but so opposed to, truth and piety, as to call for the erection of a citadel of defence in their behalf, are employing the agency of confidential circulars, offers of money to defray expenses, private management, and unequivocal dictation to the laity, in order to promote an object, which, grievous as is the inconsistency between the means and the end, they avow to be pursued by them, solely for the glory of God. The bishop and his friends may ask, and in their behalf I would earnestly solicit, the prayers, not only of pious episcopalians *in* the diocese, but of christians and churchmen throughout the country. Let them pray, first, that God would blot from the book of his remembrance, the record of this *dark* attempt of our brethren, to mislead the episcopalians of the state, and to array an organized, pledged, heated, and prejudiced association, against the bishop and his friends, at the approaching Convention. Let them pray, again, that the indignant feelings which the discovery of this effort is calculated to rouse in honest minds, may be so controlled by God's grace, as to prevent the rising of any other emotions in our hearts, but those of pity for their blindness, and of forgiveness for the injuries meditated or done against our religious or our ministerial characters. Let them pray, that the individual who shall be selected by the Convention, as the assistant of our present venerated diocesan, may be one well qualified, with faithful diligence, to banish and drive away from the church, all erroneous and strange doctrine, contrary to God's word—well qualified to show himself an example of good works unto others—well qualified to maintain, and set forward, quietness, love, and peace, among all men—and well qualified, diligently to exercise such discipline as, by the authority of God's word, and by the order of the church, may be committed to him. Let them pray, (not weekly, but *daily* and *hourly*.) that the clouds of prejudice against the views and policy, and, I fear, in some cases, the persons, of the bishop and his friends, which now darken the minds of their brethren, and are perhaps the sources of their apparent disregard of that nice principle of religion, which prohibits the employment of bad, and even of suspicious, means, to promote a good end. may soon, under the governance of Provi-

dence, be dispersed from their bosoms: and that the day may rapidly approach, when, holding an unity of faith in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life, the only object of both clergy and laity shall be, in harmony and union, to advance the church of the Redeemer, to promote the glory of God, and to save themselves and others.

PLAIN TRUTH.

2nd April, 1827.